

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1772

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ESCAP, OCON
SUBJ: ESCAP COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, HOUSING AND TECHNOLOGY,
THIRD SESSION, BANGKOK, 19-25 SEPTEMBER

REF: STATE 236201

1. SUMMARY. THIRD SESSION OF THE SUBJECT COMMITTEE CON-
CLUDED DISCUSSIONS ON 25 SEPTEMBER IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF
HARMONY AND GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE POLICIES AND
STRATEGIES FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE THIRD UNITED
NATIONS DEVELOPMENT DECADE. THE DIRECTION OF REGIONAL
ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF INDUSTRY, TECHNOLOGY, HUMAN
SETTLEMENTS AND ENVIRONMENT WERE REVIEWED AND FOUND
ACCEPTABLE THOUGH DISAPPOINTMENT WAS EXPRESSED OVER THE
SLOW PACE OF GROWTH AND LACK OF FUNDS TO CARRY OUT MORE
THAN HALF OF THE WORK PROGRAM. RECOGNITION WAS GIVEN
TO RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
WITH REFERENCE TO THE RECENT ESCAP TRADE MINISTERS
MEETING IN NEW DELHI. CONCERNED WAS EXPRESSED AT THE
GROWING TREND OF PROTECTIONISM IN SOME INDUSTRIALIZED
COUNTRIES AND PLEAS WERE MADE FOR REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS
AGAINST IMPORT PRODUCTS FROM THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.
THE WORK PROGRAMS AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN WERE ENDORSED WITH
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LITTLE DISCUSSION. THE RECOMMENDATION TO CHANGE ITS
NAME TO THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND
TECHNOLOGY WAS ALSO ENDORSED TO THE 35TH COMMISSION
SESSION. END SUMMARY.
2. THE THIRD SESSION OF ESCAP COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY,
HOUSING AND TECHNOLOGY WAS ATTENDED BY 18 MEMBER COUNTRIES
PLUS THE FRG AND ROMANIA AS OBSERVERS. THAILAND WAS

ELECTED CHAIRMAN WITH VICE CHAIRMEN FROM PHILIPPINES AND JAPAN. INDIA WAS ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF TECHNICAL AND DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND BAGLADESH, RAPPORTEUR. THE COMMITTEE PROCEEDED THROUGH THE AGENDA IN A LOW KEY AND NON-CONTROVERSIAL MANNER CHARACTERIZED BY CONGENIALITY.

3. MAIN THEME OF SESSION: POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, FOCUSSED ON BROAD FRAMEWORK OF STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE LAID DOWN BY ESCAP MINISTERS OF INDUSTRY MEETING HELD IN 1977. WITH SOME ADJUSTMENTS IN EMPHASIS AND OTHER MODIFICATIONS, THE COMMITTEE AGREED THIS COULD SERVE AS BASIS FOR A STRATEGY FOR ESCAP REGION DURING THE 1980S. IT ALSO WELCOMED THE ACCENT AND PRIORITY GIVEN TO ACTIVITIES IN THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NON-METROPOLITAN AREAS AND FELT GREATER ATTENTION COULD BE DEVOTED TO DEVELOPMENT OF BASIC INDUSTRIES, PARTICULARLY METALLURGY, ENGINEERING AND MACHINE BUILDING INDUSTRIES, AND BASIC CHEMICALS. (INSUFFICIENT FUNDS WILL CURTAIL PROGRESS IN THESE PROGRAMS FOR THE TIME BEING). THE COMMITTEE FULLY SUPPORTED THE STRENGTHENING OF LINKAGES BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE, BETTER SPATIAL DISPERSAL OF INDUSTRIES WITHIN COUNTRIES, ORIENTATION OF INDUSTRY TO SATISFY THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE POOR AND PROMOTION OF SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES AND THEIR LINKAGES WITH LARGE AND BASIC INDUSTRIES. MUCH PRAISE WAS ACCORDED THE RESULTS OF THE MINISTERS OF

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INDUSTRY MEETING AND SUPPORT GIVEN FOR THE FOLLOW-UP AD HOC MINISTERIAL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 1979. A MEETING OF THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIAL CLUB WILL ALSO BE HELD IN JANUARY 1979 TO REVIEW RESULTS OF THE CASE STUDIES SELECTED BY THE CLUB WHICH INCLUDE INDONESIA, PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, BANGLADESH AND APUA NEW GUINEA. THE THAI DELEGATION, SPEAKING FOR ASEAN, INVITED CLOSER INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION WITH ESCAP BUT THIS SUGGESTION WAS PURSUED ONLY ONCE, BY JAPAN. ALL DELEGATIONS SUBSCRIBED TO THE IDEA OF HOLDING SEMINARS ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND TAX ADMINISTRATION BUT THE ONLY DONOR PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE, BY HOSTING SEMINARS, WAS JAPAN. SRI LANKA COMMENTED THAT FOREIGN INVESTMENT SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED WITH HOSTILITY AND FEAR. RATHER, ESCAP COUNTRIES SHOULD DISTINGUISH BETWEEN INDUSTRY CAPITAL AND SPECULATIVE CAPITAL FOR THE LATTER COULD PROVE HARMFUL. ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO THE THIRD GENERAL UNIDO CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT NEW DELHI IN 1980 AND THE DESIRABILITY OF HOLDING A HIGH LEVEL REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING IN THE SECOND OR THIRD QUARTER OF 1979.

4. TECHNOLOGY. THE COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE UNCSTD PREPA-

RATIONS HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL. NATIONAL PAPERS HAD BEEN SUBMITTED ON SCHEDULE WHILE THE REGIONAL PAPER AND PROGRAM OF ACTION HAD BEEN REVISED IN LINE WITH THE REGIONAL PREPCOM RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINALIZED. THERE WAS NEED FOR GREATER EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE REGION. CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION WAS DEVOTED TO KEEPING UP THE REGIONAL MOMENTUM GENERATED BY THE PREPARATORY PHASE TILL THE UNCSTD MET AND ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO A SERIES OF MEETINGS AND SEMINARS PROPOSED IN THE COMING MONTHS. CONCERNING THE REGIONAL CENTER AT BANGALORE, AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN CAUTIONED AGAINST OVER-

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AMBITIOUS PROGRAMS IN LIGHT OF SHORTAGE IN FUNDS AND ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY. RCTT LINKAGES WITH NATIONAL PROGRAMS AND THE NEED FOR A MORE PRAGMATIC PROGRAM WERE STRESSED. JAPAN CONSIDERED THE LINKAGE WITH ASEAN AND THE CONCEPT OF A COMMON MARKET AS PREMATURE AND DUBIOUS BUT NO OTHER DELS COMMENTED. UK DEL WELCOMED BROAD OUTLINE OF RCTT WORKSHOPS AND EFFORT TO REDUCE DUPLICATION. UK BELIEVED THERE HAD BEEN TOO MUCH SALES PITCH FOR ONE VARIETY OF SPONGE IRON PLANT PROCESS AND SUGGESTED ESCAP CONSIDER EXPERIENCE OF IRAN, MEXICO, FRG AND THE U.S. THE UNESCO REP SUGGESTED THAT TECHNOLOGY OVERLAP AMONG ESCAP COUNTRIES WAS NOT SERIOUS AND THAT IT WAS REALLY AN "INTERFINGERING". THIS NON-SEQUITUR WAS NOT PURSUED BY OTHER DELEGATIONS. MOST DELEGATIONS VOICED COMPLAINT OVER INADEQUATE FUNDING FOR RCTT PROJECTS AND SINGLED OUT UNDP FOR THIS FAILURE. THE UNDP REP EXPLAINED THAT THE INITIAL 100,000 DOLS WAS A ONE TIME CONTRIBUTION BUT THEY WERE PREPARED TO CONSIDER

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR ANY PROJECTS SUBMITTED BY RCTT.
THE COMMITTEE PLACED SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON ESCAP AND RCTT
EFFORTS TO BUILD UP THE NATIONAL CENTERS AND THEIR
LINKAGE TO THE REGIONAL NETWORK.

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5. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. THE COMMITTEE ENDORSED THE SUG-
GESTION THAT THE MAIN THEME OF THE COMMITTEE'S FOURTH
SESSION BE DEVOTED TO HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND AGREED THAT
THE PRESENT DESIGNATION BE CHANGED TO THE COMMITTEE OF
INDUSTRY, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY. IT ALSO
ENDORSED THE REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE CONTAINED IN
E/ESCAP/IHT.3/9. THE SOVIETS OBJECTED TO THE PROLIFER-
ATION OF CENTERS FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND SINGLED OUT
PHILIPPINE PLANS TO ESTABLISH ONE THROUGH ITS NEWLY
CREATED MINISTRY OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. THE NETHERLANDS
ARGUED FOR SUPPORT OF EXISTING CENTERS WHILE AUSTRALIA
STRESSED THE NEED FOR RATIONALIZING THE CENTERS TO INSURE
ADEQUATE FINANCING.

6. ENVIRONMENT. THE COMMITTEE COMMENDED THE DECISION TO
ESTABLISH AN ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATING UNIT (ECU) UNDER
THE ESCAP EXECUTIVE SECRETARY IN COOPERATION WITH UNEP.
IT WAS HOPED THAT THE ECU COULD TAKE OVER THE FOLLOW-UP
ACTIVITIES OF THE RECENTLY TERMINATED "TASK FORCE ON
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT" AND ALSO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS
REGARDING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LEGISLATION WITH
TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM UNEP. THE UNEP
REP STATED THAT AS RESULT OF THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY
THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL HELD IN 1978, ACTION WAS BEING
TAKEN TO INCREASE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO ESCAP FOR
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES. IN BRIEF DISCUSSION
ON PROPOSED SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLE-
MENTS, ESCAP WAS THE COORDINATOR IN CONSULTATION WITH
THE SPC. NO DEFINITE PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING EMERGED
SINCE ESCAP WAS AWAITING RESULTS OF A SOUTH PACIFIC
FORUM MEETING (IN WHICH SPC PARTICIPATES) WHICH WOULD
DISCUSS SOUTH PACIFIC PLANS ON ENVIRONMENT BEFORE
DECIDING HOW ESCAP COULD MESH WITH ISLAND PLANS.

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USDEL INFORMED SECRETARIAT OUR BELIEF FOCUS OF CONFERENCE
SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON MARINE POLLUTION, CONSERVATION OF
LAND AND BIOTA. SECRETARIAT WELCOMED US OFFER TO ASSIST
WITH DOCUMENTATION AT APPROPRIATE TIME (PER REFTEL).

7. WORK PROGRAM AND PRIORITIES. THE COMMITTEE ENDORSED THE WORK PROGRAM AND PRIORITIES 1978-79, 1980-81 AND THE MEDIUM TERM PLAN 1980-83 WITH VERY LITTLE DISCUSSION. BANGLADESH EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES. THE NETHERLANDS WENT FURTHER BY NOTING THAT WORK PROGRAM CONTAINED 660 MAN MONTHS OF ACTIVITIES WITH A TOTAL BUDGET OF 3 MILLION DOLLARS WHICH MEANT ONLY HALF THE PROGRAM COULD BE ACHIEVED. NETHERLANDS DEL ASKED IF

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THE UNDERTAKING WAS FEASIBLE AND FOR AN ELABORATION OF LINKAGE BETWEEN WORK PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIES. NONE WAS GIVEN. US DEL JOINED IN STRESSING NEED FOR ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES AND DREW SPECIFIC ATTENTION TO ABSENCE OF PRIORITIES IN MEDIUM TERM PLAN FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS. OTHER DELEGATIONS SIMPLY ACKNOWLEDGED THEIR APPROVAL OF THE DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

8. DRAFT REPORT TOGETHER WITH APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTS BEING POUCHED DEPARTMENT. ABRAMOWITZ

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